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A. D. GNAGEY, : : Editor.

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WHY WE EXIST AS A CHURCH.

Is there a good reason why the Brethren church should exist as an organization, separate from all others? There are numerous church organizations all about us holding different faiths concerning the doctrines of God, and the plan of salvation. In most cases, these denominations, outnumber us ten to one, and in wealth and influence we hold no comparison with them. Here we are; a small body, struggling, laboring hard, amid inconveniences, to maintain our institutions. Self-denials and sacrifices are required on every hand. Is it worth while? Is there any good reason for all this? Other denominations invite us and bid us welcome with them. Why continue the struggle? Why not go elsewhere and find a home in a large body whose institutions are already established and where it means less to follow Christ?

If one were to consult ease and popularity this is exactly what he would do. We believe however that there is a good reason—a *gospel* reason why we should exist as a separate church organization. Upon each individual there are higher claims than those which consult his own conveniences. There are certain doctrines and practices which make the Brethren church a *distinctive* organization—a *peculiar* organization, we might almost say *unique*, there being none other like it. These doctrines and practices we hold as ordained of God and commanded by Christ, and therefore essential to the highest spiritual welfare of mankind. Can we enjoy the fruits of these doctrines in any other outside of our communion? If not, then the reason for our existence becomes apparent. If we hold these doctrines as fundamental, then it becomes us to form an organization in which we may practice them and enjoy the fruits which come from a perfect obedience to the whole law of the Gospel.

Such an organization is the Brethren church, and it is the duty of every member to do all he can do to promote its welfare and increase its influence in the world. To do this requires means, and one of the most potent of these is *church literature*,

a literature as distinctive and as peculiar as our doctrine. The very fact that there is a reason why we should exist as a church, is a strong argument in favor of our own literature. We need a good, strong church paper that will disseminate the doctrines of the church.

We need Sunday-school literature that will preach our doctrine to the boys and girls. We need thousands of tracts that will go out preaching the pure and unadulterated Gospel of Jesus.

THE OPEN MYSTERY.

No experience comes to a man or a woman of affairs, professional or otherwise, that so nearly approaches the tragic as the appeal for work from an untrained woman who has reached, or passed, middle life. It is needless to say that a woman who applies for work at that age is untrained, too often unfitted, mentally or physically, for any labor. She may have worked for years, but she has changed her employment often in the hope of improving her condition, or because she has never shown peculiar fitness for any place she has found; she is the first one dropped in the dull season, and so becomes that saddest of sad things in life—human driftwood. If she has a hopeful temperament, she retains some vitality and enthusiasm. The woman is rare who retains either under the rebuffs and disappointments inseparable from the lot of the untrained woman who must be self-supporting.

The first business of every man or woman who engages to sell time and ability in the market is to sell both where they, plus character, will be of the greatest value. If the work offers the free play that comes with a love for it, success must follow. If the work does not appeal to the whole man or woman, he, or she, must compel a love for it by mastery of it. Each day must be made to count in experience, knowledge, constructive ability.

No life can be a success unless it is made cumulative. A life that dissipates its energies in experimenting in many fields cannot take root; it becomes a weed springing up wherever there is room.

The most amazing experience with an untrained woman seeking work is the exhibition of childlike faith, the unquestioning belief that help can be given for the asking. In absolute ignorance as to ability, training, or even the kind of work desired, advice is expected from the person to whom the appeal is made. There can be no more bewildering or hopeless answer given to the question, "What can you do?" or "What do you want to do?" than—"Anything."

No one ever succeeded in that limitless field of "anything." "Something" is the foundation of every success. And that foundation must be built on each day; the structure must accumulate in form, in strength, in definiteness of purpose, in symmetry, in beauty. No life can be a success unless these elements enter into it, are its controlling principles.

Success with some is construed as fame spelled with a capital. Success is that mastery of forces within and without which permits of the evolution of the gift, or the talent, that marks each man apart from his fellows. The measure of success depends upon the degree of mastery of details, the adapting of the whole nature to the work undertaken, the compelling of every experience to be a light that will light the way to perfection, whether the work done is that of love or compulsion. —*The Outlook*.

A WINTER NIGHT AT HOME.

When does the person or domestic tastes enjoy home more than a stormy winter night? You reach the dearest place on earth after dark, with the cheerful light shining out upon the fast-falling snow, and at once are compensated for all the discomforts you have undergone. Let it storm now as furiously as it will; you do not care, except as you think of those who are exposed to the weather, and especially of the poor wretches to whom the word "home" is nothing but a memory. Here you are again, safe and sound, with pleasant faces and voices to greet you. Every one is glad to see you; even the cat, as he lazily rises up behind the stove and humps his back, seems to wish you to understand that your presence has been the only thing wanting to make the happiness of the scene complete. You kiss the wife and the "chickens," eat your supper with an appetite that only a mile's walk through deepening drifts can develop and are ready for a half hour with the children. Then, the children snugly tucked up in bed, you sit down with the woman of your love and surrender yourself to the unalloyed pleasure of a winter evening at home. The time passes only too swiftly. You give a little time to your paper, perhaps, after you take down your Whittier, and, while the wife repairs a rent in Billy's coat, read aloud from "Snow Bound," occasionally laying down the book to make a comment or to ask a question relating to the family history for the day. At length the clock on the mantel-piece strikes ten, and you are reminded by that, as well as by the drowsy feeling that steals over you, that it is time to retire. Oh, the luxury of that thought! there is not the slightest reason, so far as you know, why you should not have a perfect night's rest. —*The Watchman*.